

## LISTING OF CLAIMS

- 1-8. (Canceled)
9. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid encoding an Ozz protein wherein the Ozz protein is expressed only in cardiac and skeletal muscle, comprises about 285 amino acids, and shares about 90% sequence identity or about 92% sequence similarity with SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4.
10. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 9 which is a cDNA.
- 11-12. (Canceled)
13. (Previously presented) The nucleic acid of claim 9, wherein the Ozz protein is a mouse Ozz protein with a molecular weight of about 30 kilo-Daltons (kDa).
14. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 13 which comprises a nucleotide sequence as depicted in SEQ ID NO:1.
15. (Currently amended) A vector comprising a nucleic acid encoding a fragment of an Ozz protein operatively associated with an expression control sequence, wherein the fragment of an Ozz protein has the ability to bind a protein selected from the group consisting of  $\beta$ -catenin, myosin, c-Nap, and Alix; wherein full-length Ozz protein shares about 90% sequence identity or about 92% sequence similarity with SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4 and comprises about 285 amino acids.
16. (Original) The vector according to claim 15, wherein the fragment of an Ozz protein is a full length Ozz protein.
17. (Currently amended) An isolated host cell transfected with the vector of claim 15.
18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) A method for producing Ozz protein comprising isolating Ozz protein produced by the host cells of claim 17, wherein the host cells have been cultured under conditions that provide for expression of the Ozz protein by the vector.
20. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid consisting of at least ten consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3 that hybridizes under stringent conditions with a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as depicted in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, with the proviso that the isolated nucleic acid is not a PPCA exon Ia, wherein the stringent conditions are hybridization at 68°C in 0.2XSSC or 42°C in 50% formamide, 4XSSC.
- 21-33. (Canceled)
34. (New) The nucleic acid of claim 9, wherein the Ozz protein is a human Ozz protein.
35. (New) The nucleic acid of claim 11, which comprises a nucleotide sequence as depicted in SEQ ID NO:3.